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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KAMPALA 000013

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCOR](#) [KDEM](#) [UG](#)
SUBJECT: UGANDA: USG SUPPORTED ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTIVIST THREATENED

REF: 08 KAMPALA 01484

CLASSIFIED BY: Aaron Sampson, Pol/Econ Chief, State, Pol/Econ;
REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (C) Summary: The Director of the Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU), Jasper Tumuhimbise, went into hiding in late December after publishing a "Fame and Shame" booklet on government corruption. Funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) anti-corruption threshold program, ACCU's booklet is a public perception survey in which Security Minister and National Resistance Movement (NRM) Secretary General Amama Mbabazi was perceived as Uganda's most corrupt public official. Tumuhimbise went into hiding after he and ACCU staff received threatening telephone calls and a visit from security personnel seeking information on the ACCU's international donors. On December 24, Tumuhimbise told PolOff that security forces followed him from the eastern town of Soroti to Kampala. He blames Mbabazi for the intimidation of ACCU staff. End Summary.

ACCU's Book of Fame and Shame

12. (U) The ACCU is a coalition of approximately 60 local anti-corruption organizations. In 2009, the ACCU received approximately \$25,000 in MCC funds to survey local perceptions of government corruption, publish an annual book of "Fame and Shame", and initiate an anti-corruption activist of the year award. The ACCU says the booklet is intended to praise anti-corruption "heroes" and force "the shamed persons to reflect on themselves; the institutions they serve; their country and their level of patriotism." Of the 1,772 survey respondents, 30% identified Security Minister Mbabazi as Uganda's most corrupt public official due to his role in the 2008 Temangalo land scandal that cost the National Social Security Fund approximately \$6 million (ref. A). President Museveni placed second on the list of shame, with 21% the vote, for failing to hold Mbabazi, Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa, and senior National Resistance Movement (NRM) leaders accountable for corruption. Other "shamed" NRM officials include Trade Minister Kahinda Otafiire, Public Works Minister John Nasasira, and former Health Ministers Mike Mukula and Jim Muhwezi.

13. (U) Museveni also made the ACCU's list of fame "as an unwavering freedom fighter and anti-corruption activist." Disgraced ex-Inspector General of Government Faith Mwendha, opposition figure Norbert Mao, and First Lady Janet Museveni topped the fame list. Survey respondents also positively perceived Ethics and Integrity Minister Nsaba Buturo, who is one of the most vocal proponents of Uganda's draft anti-homosexuality legislation, for "his

outspokenness against corruption." Minister Buturo presided over the booklet's launching ceremony. The ACCU selected James Ogoola, Principal Judge of the High Court of Uganda, as the Anti-Corruption Activist of the Year for 2009.

The "Shamed" Self-Incriminate Themselves Further

14. (C) On December 19, Mbabazi criticized the ACCU's booklet and called Tumuhimbise an "idiot" on a local radio program. On December 21, Mbabazi's niece, Susan Katono, emailed a document criticizing the ACCU's motives, methodology and findings to EconOff. Katono compiled the document from comments sent to her by senior government officials with the understanding that she would forward the information to the U.S. Mission. Katono indicated that Minister Mbabazi and other NRM leaders were unhappy with the booklet.

15. (C) On December 23, local media reported that Tumuhimbise was in hiding, that ACCU staff were receiving threatening phone calls, and that security officials questioned ACCU employees on the organization's sources of funding. Tumuhimbise confirmed this

KAMPALA 00000013 002 OF 002

information to PolOff on December 24, adding that he left Kampala on the advice of friends only to return after discovering that security services were shadowing him upcountry as well. Tumuhimbise said a security vehicle tailed him from the eastern town of Soroti back to Kampala. Having spearheaded the ACCU's lawsuit against the NSSF over Mbabazi's Temangalo land scandal in 2008, Tumuhimbise said he is accustomed to menacing phone calls, but that being followed by a security services vehicle is new. Tumuhimbise added that he is using a different telephone out of fear that Ugandan security is tracking his regular cell phone.

Comment: Treating Critics Like Criminals

16. (C) Under Mbabazi's leadership, it appears Ugandan security services spend the majority their time tracking opposition leaders and critics of the NRM. While the ACCU's analytical methodology was not the most advanced, its list of shame accurately captured public perceptions of Uganda's most corrupt government officials. Mbabazi's apparent response - tasking security services to hound ACCU employees - interferes with a USG funded organization's attempt to improve government transparency and reduce public sector corruption. As the ACCU's most shamed public figure, Mbabazi is living up to expectations.

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